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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

**Washington, DC 20515**

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Hon. Ken Salazar, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

Congratulations on your confirmation to lead the Department of Interior. I look forward to working with you as you bring constructive change to the Department. My constituents and I applaud President Obama's commitment to bring transparency back to government, and restore the public's faith that decisions are based fairly on law and facts and not based on personal or political considerations.

You are undoubtedly aware of the widespread perception that the previous administration applied personal and political considerations in their decision-making, sometimes circumventing the law. Nowhere was this more evident than in the decision-making process concerning off-reservation gaming. While the law and regulations set forth a legal process with clear standards, and while dedicated BIA staff applied those standards in their reviews and recommendations, objective assessments appear to have been disregarded by senior officials who personally opposed all off-reservation gaming applications.

As you begin your service, I ask that you restore people's faith in the Department's decision-making process by recruiting department leaders who will bring an open mind and a commitment to the rule of law to their work. In this matter, public perception is a critical factor.

I further ask that you take steps to expeditiously review the decisions made in the final days of the Bush administration. In those cases where it appears that decisions were grounded in a flawed process or the failure to follow the law, regulations or longstanding departmental policies, I ask that you reconsider those decisions.

In particular, I bring to your attention the application of the Bad River Band and the St. Croix Chippewa Indians to build a casino in Beloit, Wisconsin. A review of the record will reveal that this project enjoys extraordinary community support. The benefits to the community and tribal members (including job creation) were well documented. The recent closure of the General Motors plant in Janesville, Wisconsin has made this job creation even more important.

Review of the application by the BIA regional office concluded that, under the two part determination set forth in the regulations, the project was substantially beneficial to the tribe and to the community. Nevertheless, under Secretary Kempthorne, the department manipulated the process to obtain a result consistent with personal hostility to off-reservation gaming, essentially rejecting the finding of the regional BIA staff.

Mr. Secretary, my constituents seek no special treatment or favors. They merely ask that the department fairly and impartially review this application and come to a decision that is based upon the facts and the law.

I ask you to give this matter your careful review and consideration. If I can provide you with any further information on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the Beloit casino project whenever your schedule permits.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress